

Application Number: 10/060,620

Docket Number: 10012155-1

REMARKS

Upon entry of this Response, claims 1-19 remain pending in the present patent application. Claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 19 have been amended. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the pending claims in view of the following remarks.

In item 3 of the Office Action, claims 3, 9, and 14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 1st paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Claims 3, 9, and 14 have been amended herein so as to address this grounds of rejection. Applicants assert that the specification discloses in multiple locations the erasing of data from an authenticated parameter table as is set forth in the response to the previous Office Action. Therefore, in view of the amendments offered herein, Applicants request that the rejection of claims 3, 9, and 14 be withdrawn.

Next, in item 4 of the Office Action, claims 1-19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,463,474 issued to Fuh et al. (hereafter "*Fuh*") in view of U.K. Patent Application No. 2331820 filed by Crawford (hereafter "*Crawford*"), and further in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 2003/0046391 filed by Moreh et al. (hereafter "*Moreh*"). A prima facie case of obviousness is established only when the prior art teaches or suggests all of the elements of the claims. MPEP §2143.03, In re Rijckaert, 9 F.3d 1531, 28 U.S.P.Q.2d 1955, 1956 (Fed. Cir. 1993). In view of the amendments to the independent claims in the present application, Applicants request that the rejection of claims 1-19 be withdrawn.

To begin, claim 1 has been amended as follows:

1. A method for parameter authentication, comprising:
discovering an existence of each one of a plurality of authentication agents in a computer system upon each startup of the computer system, wherein a total number of the authentication agents existing in the computer system is unknown upon startup of the computer system;
concurrently executing all of the authentication agents discovered in the computer system, each of the authentication agents being configured to initiate the performance of at least one authentication task to authenticate an unauthenticated user parameter for one of a plurality of functions, each of the functions corresponding to one of the authentication agents;

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examining, for each respective one of the authentication agents, an authenticated parameter table to determine whether an unauthenticated user parameter is listed therein before each respective one of the authentication agents is employed to initiate performance of the at least one authentication task; and
bypassing, for each respective one of the authentication agents, the initiation of the performance of the authentication task to authenticate the unauthenticated user parameter if the unauthenticated user parameter is listed in the authenticated parameter table.

As set forth above, claim 1 has been amended so as to include the step of discovering an existence of each one of a plurality of authentication agents in a computer system upon startup of the computer system. In this respect, the total number of authentication agents existing in the computer system is unknown upon startup of the computer system. Thereafter, all of the authentication agents discovered are concurrently executed in the computer system.

The above mentioned amendments to claim 1 distinguish claim 1 from the references cited by the Office Action. Specifically, the cited references fail to show or suggest discovering authentication agents as claimed. The fact that the system does not actually know how many authentication agents actually exist in the system upon start up provides evidence of the extensibility of the authentication system as set forth in claims 1-19. In particular, since there is no need to incorporate a static link between given authentication agents and other software components in order to provide for authentication of various functions as is described in the specification, then new authentication agents may be added for new functions very easily. Consequently, the authentication manager that "discovers" the authentication agents upon start up of the system need not be changed to accommodate the addition of new authentication agents—it just discovers them. Thus, as a given device evolves over time to incorporate new functions such as, for example, where a copy machine might have been developed over a period of time in order to incorporate scanning functionality, and then faxing functionality, *etc.*, authentication agents may easily be added to address authentication for newly created or added functions.

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Applicants assert that the cited references fail to show the concurrent execution of all of the authentication agents discovered in the computer system as well. In this respect, all of the authentication agents are consulted during authentication of a given user parameter. However, only one of the authentication agents might actually perform an authentication task. In case an authentication agent is asked to authenticate a parameter that it is not configured to authenticate, then such authentication agent simply informs the authentication manager that it does not perform such task or may just indicate that it believes the authentication parameter is valid.

Applicant asserts that none of the cited references shows or suggests at least the features of discovering the authentication agents, where the existence of authentication agents is unknown before start up. Also, the cited combination of references fails to show or suggest the concurrent execution of multiple authentication agents. Rather, to the extent that the prior art references discuss the execution of an authentication agent, it is execution of a single authentication agent at a time.

Accordingly, for the foregoing reasons, Applicants request that the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn. In addition, Applicants request that the rejection of claim 7, 12, and 17-19 be withdrawn to the extent that they incorporate subject matter similar in scope with that of claim 1. In addition, Applicant requests that the rejection of claims 2-6, 8-11, and 13-16 be withdrawn is depending from claims 1, 7, and 12, respectively.

In addition, it is noted that miscellaneous amendments are made to various ones of the claims for consistency with the amendments made to claims 1, 7, 12, and 17-19.

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CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request that all outstanding objections and rejections be withdrawn and that this application and all presently pending claims be allowed to issue. If the Examiner has any questions or comments regarding this response, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned counsel of Applicants.

Respectfully submitted,



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